

Too Bashful.
"Hang it all, what can a fellow do?"
A great handsome, good natured fellow was Charlie Winter, but so very bashful that in the presence of the gentler sex he never could have told whether he was standing on his head or his heels. Just now his failing was most immensely aggravated by the fact that he was over head and ears in love with Clarice Wilmer, the sweetest, prettiest, and bewitching little beauty in all the region round about.
"O dear I wish I knew a way to tell my love, and not be there myself. Deuce take the girls! They bother you on purpose, I believe; and always manage so your courage oozes out of your fingers' ends before you are quite ready to ask the fatal question."
"Why don't you write?"
"Write? I shouldn't know a word to say; and then I'd never dare to look her in the face again."
"Oh, what a spooney. Simply say you love her, and ask her if she will make you happy. Then face the music like a man, and meet her next time as if nothing had happened—unless she answered yes, and then, of course, you'll act as if something had happened."
Charley groaned despairingly.
"Easy enough for you to talk," he muttered, dubiously. "You have been married seven years—with me the case is different. I tell you, Tom, you don't know anything about it."
"Yes I do. Didn't Nell act just as Clarice does, bewitching me at one moment and almost driving me to suicide at the next? You're a lunatic, you are, and I hope Clarice will give you the mitten."
"I'm afraid she will."
"A faint heart never won a fair lady," quoted Tom Ridgely, indignantly, as he arose to take his leave. "Seriously, however, I advise you to put your heart on paper, and forward it to Clarice by the post."
Charlie thought about it after he was gone. The more he thought the better pleased with it he was.
"It's terrible but I suppose I must!" he groaned, seating himself at his writing desk, and clutching wildly at paper, pens and ink, he commenced the task.
An hour of torture. Charley began a dozen billet-doux and tore them up, then wrote a dozen more and tore them up also.
"It's utterly useless," he moaned at last, and then the great booby laid his head upon the desk and fairly sobbed.
"I'll write and ask her to go to the opera with me to-morrow night; any way, and then, perhaps—" he dared to think no further.
"My Dear,"—no, that will never do; was ever a mortal so perplexed as I am? I wish the girls at the bottom of ocean, and Eve had never been created.
"Well, I'll begin again."
This time he was successful. His note was short enough, and some young ladies might take umbrage at such an invitation, but Charles knew his bashfulness. It read as follows, and was not dated at all:
"Will you be kind enough to honor me by the acceptance of my escort to the opera to-morrow eve?"
And that was all, besides the signature.
"Well there," said Charles, as he got it done. "I promised sister Minnie I would write to her this week, so I will do it now while my hand is in." And tossing the note one side he soon began his letter.
"Sister Minnie," (it read) "Yours of the 17th came to hand, as I have meant to answer it before. The fact is, I am deep in love with a young lady, Clarice Wilmer, of whom you've heard me speak, and I'm afraid she don't return it. You know I am so confoundedly bashful I daren't write. Sometimes I think I've got the necessary courage, but when I meet her it vanishes like dew before the sun, and I'm a bigger fool than ever. I know she thinks I'm a fool, but I can't help it. I'd rather face a cannon, or an engine of destruction than a pretty woman any time. Clarice is the fairest, sweetest, and most beautiful young lady I ever saw."
Here followed three whole pages of a lover's rhapsody, interspersed with wailings of despair, and then the letter wound up thus:
"I've asked her to the opera to-morrow night, and if she goes, 'tis possible that I may learn my fate."
"Three o'clock—can it be possible?" cried Charley, glancing at the clock, and stuffing his letters into envelopes, which he backed in an awful haste.
"The mail goes out in an hour. I shall be late as sure as fate."
And paying no heed to the rhyme, and little to the letters, he grasped his hat and started for the post office.
Clarice smiled her brightest when Charley called for her next night, but he fancied there was mischief in her eyes, which perhaps was quite all a fancy. At the opera she talked and

laughed between the scenes in such a way that he was quite bewildered. He did not learn his fate, and after he got home felt worse than ever.
Next day he got a letter from his sister.
"I am very sorry," wrote she, "but could not well come a hundred miles, simply to attend an opera, I suppose, however, the invitation was intended for another person, and if—"
"Jove, I am undone!" said Charlie, dropping the missive to the floor, and breaking out in a cold perspiration. "I sent the letters wrong and I've done it brown. What will Clarice think of the letter?"
Driven to desperation at last, he plucked up courage and hurried to Clarice's residence.
"Is Miss Wilmer in?" he asked the servant who answered the bell.
"Yes," and he speedily found himself in the parlor, and face to face with his innamorata.
"I—I—did you receive a note from me the other day, Miss Clarice?" he stammered, wishing the floor would give way and precipitate him into the cellar.
"I received a letter, Mr. Winter," said Clarice, with a laugh like the tinkling of silver bells.
"Ah! yes—I ask your pardon, Miss Wilmer, for the inadvertency—I meant—"
"Oh, you need not apologize, Mr. Winter, I rather liked it, I assure you. You did not try your fate at the opera, though. Why didn't you?"
How mischievously her eyes were sparkling! A faint crimson dyed her cheek, and although, Charlie, looking at her slyly, thought she never was so lovely.
"But the annoyance—"
"It wasn't an annoyance. I was pleased."
Clarice's heart thrilled suddenly with hope. He took one step forward.
"You say that it was no annoyance. Dare I think that you care for me?"
The faint glow deepened suddenly. "You may," said she.
If Charlie's friend Tom Ridgely, had dropped in five minutes later, he would have thought Charlie's bashfulness all a sham. It never troubled him again.

Josh Billings Farmers Almanax.

My DEAR MR. EDITOR:
Sum men are born grate, sum men git grate after they are born, and sum men have gratefulness hove upon them.

It seems tew me that I am all 3 of these men hove into one.
At a mass meeting lately held in Pordunk county (mi catiff village) the inhabitants passed the following preamble and resolutes:

Whereas, It is hilly good that a Farmer's Almanax should be born for the year 1872.

Resolved, That Josh Billings should be set apart, and hereby is expressly sot apart, tew beget the job.

Resolved, That this Almanax shall be begot on the fust or next Oktober, wet or dry.

Resolved, That this Almanax shall contain milk for babies, meat for elders, and crumbs for all.

Resolved, That Knower bilt the ark, and Joner was the fust man who went a whaleing, but Josh Billings has the right ingredients for a Farmer's Almanax.

Resolved, That Faith wins the battles of life, Hope beautifys them, and Charity makes them immortal.

Resolved, That more dogs than a man wants are a nuisance, and less than he has got iz positively no loss.

Resolved, That we fully believe that man cum from the monkey, but whare the monkey cum from, we don't seem to kno.

Resolved, That the thanks ov this meeting be sent to Dargwin (or tew the monkey) we don't dare whitich.

Resolved, That all the nuzepapers in our beloved land (without distinction ov color) be allowed to print these Resolutes.

Resolved, That this meeting now unanimously bursts quietly, sinun di.

JOSH BILLINGS, Sekretary.
Ditto, Almanacker.

A Boston lady declares she is guilty of downright falsehood a dozen times a day, by saying to people she meets: "I am glad to see you," and cannot free herself from the habit of so saying.

A young gentleman who has just married a little beauty says she would have been taller, but she is made of such precious material that nature couldn't afford it.

A Detroit merchant received a check for \$9,000 from a penitent defaulter. The amount due being only \$8,000, the merchant gratefully made change with a check for the balance. Unfortunately the check afterward proved to be bogus.

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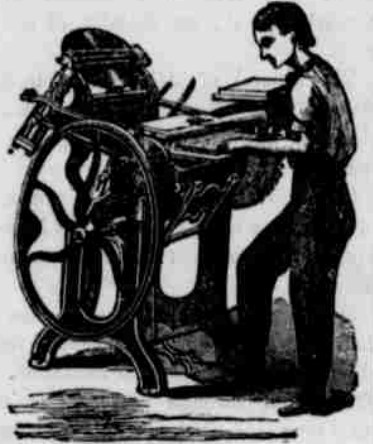
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